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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

FOR RELEASE TO AMs
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Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes today asked the National War Labor Board to settle a dispute between New England fishermen and boat owners as to the division of receipts from fish livers. Despite the urgent need for additional fish oils bearing vitamins A and D, the fishermen at present are throwing the oil-bearing livers overboard.

The Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries estimate that if the livers of such fish as cod, pollock, hake and haddock were brought in rather than being thrown overboard, one-third of the present production deficiency in low-potency fish oils could be made up.

Following is a letter addressed to William H. Davis, Chairman of the National War Labor Board by Coordinator Ickes:

"My dear Mr. Davis:

"I have been informed by the War Food Administration that there is developing an increasingly critical shortage of vitamin oils of the type produced from cod and haddock livers. Accordingly, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries is making every practical attempt to find additional supplies of suitable livers to help make up the vitamin deficit.

"The best possibility for obtaining a large increase in supplies is through utilizing livers of the fish caught by the Boston fishing fleet. This fleet produces sufficient cod and haddock to supply about 10 million pounds of livers, which would satisfy about one-third of the need.

"Practically none of these livers are now being saved. The primary reason is that the fishermen and boat owners cannot agree on how the money received from the sale of the livers should be divided. The fishermen's union demands that the fishermen receive the major share of the receipts, which varies from three-fifths to three-fourths or more of the total. The boat owners unanimously have adopted the view that the livers are the product of the joint enterprise of fisherman and boat owner and, therefore, the receipts from the sale of livers

(over)

should be included with the receipts from the sale of the fish and the total divided in the proportions based on the present "lay" or settlement agreement. These proportions on the large Boston boats are 50 percent to the crew and 50 percent to the owner.

"Both factions in this dispute have informed representatives of the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries that they are unwilling to submit the problem to arbitration, as each is convinced that it is wholly in the right and would not be justified in risking its position through such arbitration.

"The Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries and the War Food Administration have studied this problem intensively and have agreed that the first step in obtaining the livers is to settle the dispute over the division of the receipts received from their sale. When this has been accomplished, this Office and the War Food Administration will be able to undertake further necessary action to insure that the needed livers are brought into port.

"I have been informed that the War Labor Board now has for consideration a dispute between the Federated Fishing Boats of New England and New York, Incorporated, and the Atlantic Fishermen's Union of Boston; Certification No. 111-7252D, March 30, 1944, concerning the lay on Boston boats. Since the division of receipts from the sale of fish livers is a part of the over-all problem involved in sharing the receipts of the fishing enterprise, it is requested that this dispute be included with the other issues involved in the case.

"Because of the pressing nature of the problem of vitamin oil supplies, it is requested that immediate action be taken by the War Labor Board."